



Grafton Affordable Housing Trust
30 Providence Road
Grafton, MA 01519

MEETING MINUTES
Grafton Affordable Housing Trust
Wednesday, June 7, 2023
6:00PM
The Great Hall
Apple Tree Arts
1 Grafton Common
Grafton, MA 01519

2023 JUL 17 PM 3:39

RECEIVED JOHN O'LEARY
2023 JUL 10 PM 4:11

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:16pm by Chair Bruce Spinney. In attendance were Chair Bruce Spinney, Select Board Representative Andy Jefferson, Clerk Dan Cusher, and Brittany Morgan. Also in attendance were Trust Counsel Kathleen O'Donnell and Administrative Assistant Amber Diffenderfer.

The Trust welcomed Mr. Jefferson as a new member.

Review Draft of Purchase & Sale Agreement for 25 Worcester Street

The Trust informed Ms. O'Donnell that Worcester Community Housing Resources did not make a 10% deposit with their submission for the RFP. Ms. O'Donnell noted that the deposit could be made with the Purchase & Sale Agreement. Ms. O'Donnell and the Trust reviewed Section 8 of the agreement. Ms. O'Donnell agreed to send the agreement to Worcester Community Housing Resources.

Outstanding Bills

Mr. Cusher made a motion seconded by Ms. Morgan to pay the bills presented in the amount of \$3,462.68. Motion passed 4 – 0.

Meeting Minutes

Mr. Cusher made a motion seconded by Mr. Jefferson to accept the meeting minutes of April 20, May 4, and May 11 of 2023. Motion passed 4 – 0.

Consider Vote to Sign Grant Agreement with GSX for 17 & 27 Upton Street

Mr. Spinney stated that GSX was seeking reimbursement for some expenses (consulting/meals/lodging) that he does not believe the Trust should cover because they could not be paid with CPA funds. Ms. O'Donnell presented the draw request with an invoice for \$323,109.70 including consulting/meals/lodging and \$195,000.00 in architectural fees. She also presented the disbursement schedule.

Mr. Spinney called for a recess at 6:35pm.

The Trust resumed the meeting at 6:44pm.

Ms. Morgan made a motion seconded by Mr. Cusher to sign the Grant Agreement as drafted with the understanding that it may be brought back for review. Motion passed 4 – 0.

Community Housing Forum at 7:00PM

I. Welcome and Introductions

Mr. Spinney welcomed those in attendance and introduced each member of the Trust as well as Town Planner Fiona Coughlan and Consultant Karen Sunnarborg.

Ms. Coughlan invited those in attendance to contact her with any questions or feedback about the Housing Production Plan (HPP).

II. Presentations

Ms. Sunnarborg gave the Housing Production Plan/Housing Needs Assessment presentation.

III. Comment Period

A resident asked Ms. Sunnarborg to explain the connection between the plan and the housing that will actually be built. Ms. Sunnarborg spoke about the influence that zoning and CPA funds have on affordable housing.

A resident noted that it may be helpful to have data comparing housing in Grafton to other towns to help identify challenges. Ms. Sunnarborg stated that a town's Subsidized Housing Inventory (SHI) is the best measurement with a goal of 10%.

A resident asked if there were any figures from the last census for the number of Grafton residents that are retired. Ms. Sunnarborg stated that there are estimates from the census, but those are not currently included in the HPP. Mr. Prisby noted that the HPP does acknowledge the "considerable increases in older middle-aged residents" and read the section aloud on page 12 of the draft dated 4-27-23.

A resident asked if the increase from 2010 to 2020 of 174 owner-occupied units and 402 rental units were independent of the type of unit. Ms. Sunnarborg stated that they were. The resident noted that almost all the new construction during that time was for detached, single-family homes and concluded that much of this new growth is from investors renting out these homes.

IV. Roundtable Brainstorming/Breakout Groups

Those in attendance broke into six groups to discuss the following questions:

- What does affordable housing mean to you?
- What is the Town's **greatest challenge** related to preserving and producing housing affordability and diversity?
- What is an appropriate aspirational **housing goal** to strive for in the years ahead?
- What are the **best locations** for new housing development?
- What are the most important housing **actions or strategies** for the Town to implement to address housing needs?

V. Group Reports

Dave Robbins presented the actions/strategies from the first group:

- Community education/outreach
- Review existing zoning
- Create incentives for development of housing that meets the needs identified in the HPP

- Allow accessory dwelling units by right
- Allow tiny houses and duplexes

Ms. Coughlan presented the actions/strategies from the second group:

- Deeper affordability thresholds; more houses, townhouses, etc. at 100% affordable (all affordable units)
- More options so seniors and young people not competing via density
- Need to communicate better and keep this at the forefront of people's minds → bring information to the people/residents (seniors at senior center aware but need to improve)

Mr. Cusher presented the actions/strategies from the third group:

- Focus on affordability for seniors
- Incentivize starter homes
- Tax reduction for senior citizens

Ms. Morgan presented the actions/strategies from the fourth group:

- Zoning changes
 - Accessory dwelling units
 - Higher density residential zones near resources
 - 2-3 family dwellings
- Local community buy-in
 - Fits into context
 - Aesthetically desirable
- Developer requirements/incentives
 - 10% affordable unit minimum?
 - Incentives for more?
- Ensure affordable housing going to community members and those most in need
 - 30% AMI, seniors, Grafton municipal employees, those with disabilities
- Work with Grafton Housing Authority/Town to redevelop existing housing at higher density

Mr. Prisby presented the actions/strategies from the fifth group:

- Overlay districts
- Density incentives
- Increase CPA \$ to 30%
- Inclusive zoning
- Incentivize developers to do 40Bs
- As of right multi-family, end exclusionary zoning
- Leadership
- CPA membership/funds to increase AMI
- ZBA leadership
- Town-owned land to Trust

Mr. Jefferson presented the actions/strategies from the sixth group:

- Research grant opportunities for remediations of vacant/contaminated land
- Investigate why certain parcels are "stale" – not bid on
- Zoning Changes (Incentivize)
 - Multi-family structures

- In-law apartments, duplexes
- Mixed use/small business
- Outreach and community education
- The town should build affordable housing
- Partnering with non-profits

VI. Voting

Each person in attendance was given six green stickers to place on the actions/strategies they most supported and one red sticker to place on an idea that they were against.

Adjourn

The meeting was concluded after all votes were cast.

Meeting materials are available at: <https://www.grafton-ma.gov/AgendaCenter/Affordable-Housing-Trust-3>

A recording of this meeting is available at: <https://youtu.be/rtdGyLJKTWI>